

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image heating apparatus for heating an image formed on a recording material, comprising:

a flexible sleeve member;

5 a guide member provided in said flexible sleeve member, for guiding a direction of rotation of said flexible sleeve member;

a regulating member having a flange portion opposed to an end surface of said sleeve member and a  
10 sliding portion opposed to an inner surface of said sleeve member, for regulating an end of said sleeve member;

a rotatable member contacting with an outer surface of said sleeve member;

15 a nip portion formed by contacting said flexible sleeve member with said rotatable member, for heating the image formed on the recording material; and

a plurality of ribs provided at least at a  
20 portion upstream of said nip portion with respect the direction of rotation of said sleeve member along a direction of a generatrix of said flexible sleeve member;

wherein said plurality of ribs are positioned  
25 in a manner a contour of said plurality of ribs is positioned inside a contour of the sliding portion of said regulating member along a longitudinal direction

of said image heating apparatus.

2. An image heating apparatus according to  
Claim 1, wherein the contour of said sliding portion  
5 of said regulating member downstream of the nip  
portion with respect to the direction of rotation of  
said sleeve member is substantially symmetrical.

3. An image heating apparatus according to  
10 Claim 1, wherein there is a convex portion on said  
sliding portion of said regulating member downstream  
of the nip portion with respect to the direction of  
rotation of said sleeve member.

15 4. An image heating apparatus according to  
Claim 3, wherein the height of said guide member on  
the upstream side of the nip portion with respect to  
the direction of rotation of said sleeve member is  
lower than the height thereof on the downstream side.

20 5. An image heating apparatus according to  
Claim 1, further comprising a heating member held on  
a surface of said guide member adjacent to the nip  
portion.

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